

The WHITE FEATHER

By LECHMERE WORRALL AND J. E. HAROLD TERRY

The Long, Slender, Accusing Finger of Light Which Pierces the Darkness of the Sea From the Masthead of England's Scout Cruisers Flashes Into West Crest Private Hotel While Searching the Waters for a German U-Boat

Inhabitants of the United States Coast Country See the Searchlights From the Patrol Established by This Country and Its Allies Persistently Sweeping the Ocean and the Shore in Their Unrelenting Hunt for Enemy Agents

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The story opens in the West Crest private hotel in an English seacoast town where CHARLES SANDERSON, the proprietor, her son, CHARLES SANDERSON, JR., the Justice of the Peace, the doctor, MOLLY, sister-in-law, CHRISTOPHER BRENT, Molly's fiance, MIRIAM LEE, the latest arrival, MRS. MYRTLE, a singer, FRAULIN SCHROEDER, a colorful little German woman, and ERITZ, a young English naturalization, PENNICUK, a young English soldier, and BRENT, a young English naturalization, are the entire occupants of the hotel.

Brent and Miriam are representatives of the British Intelligence Office, and discover on the reverse side of the innocent-looking Frenchie a complete set of blueprints of the harbor. This discovery, which is made by the British Intelligence Office, is the first link in the Sandersons' chain of events which leads to the capture of the German spy.

Later, Brent sees sketches of the harbor made by Frenchie Schroeder, who he is convinced is the brains of the plot. The fact that there is an artist in the house accounts for the presence of carrier pigeons, and Brent shows one of the birds as it leaves the house. He discovers a sketch of the harbor defenses in a small room tied about one of the plotters' necks. The plotters decide to burn the hotel that evening, as a signal to the German waiting out at sea. They also plan to burn all the occupants.

Meanwhile, Brent and Miriam complete the details for the capture of the German spy. Absolutely at a loss to account for the many upsets of their plans, Sanderson and his colleagues determined to take Mr. Pollock into their confidence, explaining that Sanderson has been robbed of certain Admiralty papers.

Molly, in despair at the occupations leveled at her lover, decides to cooperate. She finds the map taken from the spy's bag in her room and returns to Brent to warn him as to Miriam's character. In order not to divulge any information, Mrs. Lee admits her guilt and sends for Sanderson, to whom she confesses that she is a German spy. Together the plotters complete details for the destruction of the house and the get away. Frenchie is stationed by his commanding officer on guard duty on the cliff, and Brent tells the young soldier of the Sandersons' plans.

Later, believing every one to be out of the dining room, Brent enters. His pocket searchlight fails to reveal Sanderson standing in the shadow of the bookcase.

In German Hands

BRENT went to the window and, taking another electric torch out of his pocket, proceeded to send a swift message out into the darkness. It gave really a charming effect as the bright spots of electricity were twirled this way and that, making an interweaving pattern of beams lost as soon as made, as though some tragic web were being woven on an invisible loom. But Charles Sanderson was decidedly not in the mood for admiring artistic effects, and thus it came about that the electric light

was suddenly switched up behind Chris and he turned to find himself faced by Sanderson's revolver.

"Hands up!" commanded Charles in the best wild and woolly West manner.

"Good Lord, Sanderson, how you startled me!" And Chris with a smile of relief let his hands, which still held the electric torches and which he had instinctively thrown up above his head, drop again.

"Keep them up, damn you, or you're a dead man."

Chris stared at him, but though his grin broadened he obeyed.

"Dash it all, Sanderson, aren't you car-



"Hands up!" commanded Charles in the best "wild and woolly West" style

rying this joke a little too far?" he protested.

"Do as you are told, you swine," was Sanderson's impolite rejoinder, forcibly delivered. "So you're the spy, after all!"

Brent wagged his head at him knowingly. "Oh, no, you don't," he said. "I've been had with that once today already," and his hands began to drop again.

"Keep them up. That sort of monkeying may be very clever, but it's no use to you now, my friend. Tell me at once, what were you up to?"

"Well, I wish you'd let me put these bally torches down first," said Brent, plaintively. "I'm getting most horribly cramped."

"Put them down here," ordered Sanderson, touching the table with the muzzle of his revolver.

"Thanks," said Brent more cheerfully as he laid them down. "Thanks awfully. Oof, it's a devilish cold in this kit," and he made as though to plunge his hands into the pockets of his dressing gown.

"Put them up!" This in a kind of suppressed yell from Sanderson. "Put them up and keep them up or I'll let a hole through you in another minute!"

"Look here, I'm sick of these Swedish exercises," protested Chris. "Oh, all right, have it your own way," and he once more stood in the prescribed attitude.

"Now, then," went on Charles, "we'll have it out. What were you signaling for?"

A beam of gratified pride shone over Brent's face. He gave a little chuckle. "Signaling? Did even you think I was signaling? By George! That's good."

Charles, too, smiled, but a little wearily. "It's not a bit of use trying to fool me, my friend," he advised.

"But I have fooled you," crowed Chris. "By gad, it's a bit of a score, taking you in as well."

"What the devil do you mean?"

"Look here, I'll tell you all about it, but do let me put my hands down. I shall get heart disease if you aren't careful; I shall, really. It's a great strain having to hold one's arms up above one's head like this."

"Oh, all right, but keep them away from your pockets. Now, out with it."

"Well," began Brent confidentially, "you swear you won't say anything about it at breakfast?"

"Good Lord, are you a fool or mad?" cried Charles irritably. "No, I won't say anything about it at breakfast. Now, go on."

"You know young Pennicuk's out on the cliff there? Well, he was bragging today about signaling and I said I didn't believe he had had time to get the subject up, and to prove it I have just sent him a—"

"Message," interrupted Sanderson. "You understand it, then?"

"Of course, I don't. That's just where the joke comes in," explained the delighted Brent. "I only know the first seven letters, I've sent him a spoof signal, but I'll bet you what you like he'll pretend tomorrow that he understood it." Brent's manner was perfect. His story hung together well, and Sanderson felt at a loss what to believe.

"So that's the explanation, is it?" he asked. "Well, if I were you I'd think twice before I played that silly trick again. In times like this it's liable to be misunderstood. It's damned dangerous, in fact."

"Dangerous?" Brent's face sobered considerably. "How?"

"Because I should have been quite within my duty if I'd shot you straight off with out questioning you. It's a punishable offense to send signals at night nowadays. That's why."

"By Jove, I suppose it is. But I say, Sanderson, what the blazes are you doing with that revolver? You seem to have it uncommonly handy, don't you?"

"My good Brent, in my work I have to guard myself against all emergencies," replied Charles a trifle stiffly.

"But I'm not an emergency," said the ingenuous Chris plaintively.

"Perhaps not," began Charles, but was interrupted by Brent, who, apparently diverted by catching sight of the box on the table, was moving toward it.

"Hallo," he asked, "what's that?"

"Keep off it," cried Charles quickly.

"That, Brent," he went on in an impressive manner, "is the reason why I am armed."

"The reason why you are armed?" Chris looked in bewilderment from the little box to Sanderson and back again. He then raised the eyeglass, which was still suspended round his neck, and screwed it into his eye for a better survey.

"It isn't the first time," Charles informed him, "that one of these devilish contrivances has found its way into this house."

"Devilish contrivances? What in heaven's name are you talking about? That little box looks very harmless and well meaning."

"So do you, for that matter," commented Charles, not without grimness. "My dear Brent, the safety of this house has been threatened by an unknown hand. There's an infernal machine in this box."

"Good God, you don't say so?" Chris backed away from the table, but Sanderson went toward it and lifted the lid of the box.

"Come and look for yourself," he invited the trembling young man.

"O, no, not for the world. For God's sake, be careful, Sanderson! The damn-

The best bluffer in the world is likely to have his tale "spiked" at the last minute, when an unexpected incident smashes the network of lies and lays him open to exposure. It was just Brent's fortune to be caught up in his story as escape seemed certain, and Sanderson's revolver again menaced the young man's life.

thing would go off and blow me into smithereens."

At that moment a miracle seemed to take place in the dimly lit room. It became filled with white light, stronger than sunlight, far more glaring. For one second this fierce whiteness held the air, then swept on as though right through the walls themselves, and the two men were left staring at each other in a room that seemed suddenly to have had all the light wiped out of it.

Brent knew the game was up, so far as he was concerned, but he made his effort all the same.

"By Jove, that's a fine racket! Do you suppose there's a ship in distress?" he asked with, for him, a gleeful excitement in his voice.

"Rocket be damned," said Charles roughly.

each other's gaze; each expressed understanding and a grim determination.

"So that's it, is it?" asked Sanderson slowly.

"That's it," replied Chris.

"By Jove, you're a cold-blooded customer," and there was a reluctant admiration in Sanderson's voice.

Brent now plunged his hands into his pockets and shrugged his shoulders slightly.

"One can afford to be cold-blooded when one's going to win," he remarked casually.

"Going to win, eh?" asked Charles with a laugh. "My poor, dear friend in a few moments you will be cold mutton."

"What a nasty smile!" remarked Brent, returning to his old affected manner. "I suppose, by the way, Sanderson, there's no objection to my having a last smoke?"

"By all means," replied his adversary politely, and he pushed a box of cigarettes toward him.

Another swift transfiguration of the room



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ly. "That's a searchlight, and you know it. Where's it come from?"

"I don't know," said Chris lamely.

"Look here, Brent, I'm not satisfied. Hands up again! I'm going to make sure about you. Hands up, I say!"

With a resigned gesture, Chris put up his hands and Charles came toward him, always keeping him covered, and with his left hand he searched the pockets of Brent's dressing gown. In the second one he came on a revolver. He looked from it to Brent, who this time met him with a quite different expression. For a moment the two men held

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took place while Chris was lighting his cigarette and showed his face looking pale, indeed, as it was bound to be in that bright glare, but perfectly placid and contented. By some trick of the light and shadow Sanderson's face took on for a fleeting moment the look of a death's head. His eyes very deeply set in their sockets, seemed pools of shadow, while his lips, usually firmly closed, were drawn back and showing his teeth as he smiled at Brent. The next second the room was dark again, but Brent's swift Celtic imagination had been touched to an almost superstitious thrill at the sight.

"Smoking under fire, eh?" commented Charles, still smiling. "It shall be duly recorded in your obituary notice."

"So you intend to shoot me?" asked Chris pleasantly.

"Most certainly. You're caught at last, my dear Brent. You must see for yourself that I can't afford to let you go. As a special privilege I will shoot you with a revolver on the table while he still keeps Chris covered with the weapon he had discovered in the pocket of the dressing gown."

Brent made a gesture with his hands as if one who appeals to the world at large. "Who says Germans have no sense of humor?" he demanded, and quite unconscious of his death would be complete unless you own peculiarly tasteful remarks were included, my dear Herr von Mantel."

"O, so you know that, do you?"

"Yes, I know that, and quite a lot of other things, too. I know, for instance, that you are not going to fire on me."

"Indeed; may I ask why?"

"For the very simple reason that you would rouse the house, and that, I fancy, is the last thing you wish to do."

"By Jove, you are a plucky chap. You seem to have made good use of your youth. I must say."

"Yes," agreed Chris. "Diplomacy and spy hunting are amusing recreations for the man who has to stay at home," and, turning, Chris began to saunter toward the window.

"Stay where you are," ordered Charles fiercely, "or you'll be a dead man. I'll blow the whole lot of us to pieces with that box there."

Brent paused and Sanderson swept swiftly between him and the window, still keeping him covered. What Brent had been maneuvering for had come to pass, and making a dash at the table he snatched up Charles's revolver.

Charles sprang forward, but too late, and the next moment the two men were looking at each other over their leveled weapons.

"Shall we call it a stalemate, eh, mate here?" asked Chris with his pleasant smile.

"To hell with stalemate and with you, too," cried Charles, and aiming straight at the little box on the table he pulled the trigger of his revolver. The hammer clicked, and that was all. No detonation followed.

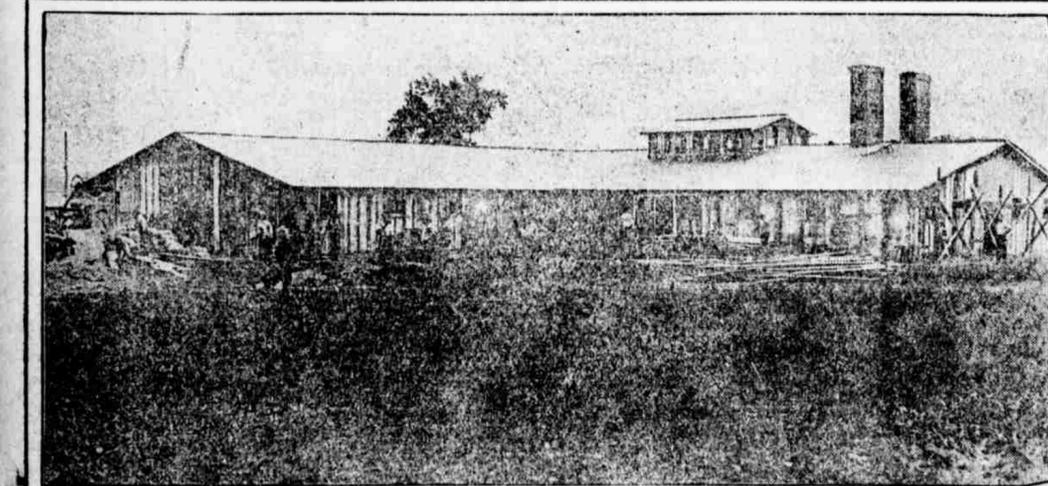
Brent was laughing outright by now.

"Checkmate, I think," he observed. "A loaded revolver, my dear Herr von Mantel, is a loaded weapon for a diplomatist. I never carry one. By the way, I'm sorry to trouble you, but do you mind putting up your hands? It's very uncomfortable, I know, but it seems to be the smart thing to do here."

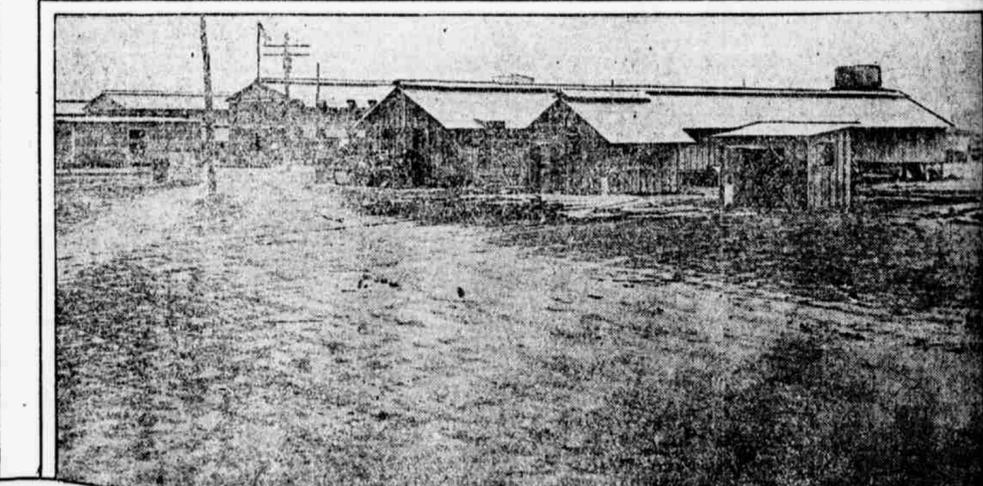
He felt conscious of the bad taste of his gibe even as he uttered it, for he knew that he saw before him a heartbroken man. In that moment Charles had realized that he had been absolutely outplayed and put a loophole was left to him. His years of work, his ambitions so nearly realized, were to come to nothing. He flung away the useless revolver and knew that his life, what remained of it to him, was as futile as the weapon. And there is nothing more ridiculous than an empty revolver in a moment of emotion.

(CONTINUED TOMORROW)

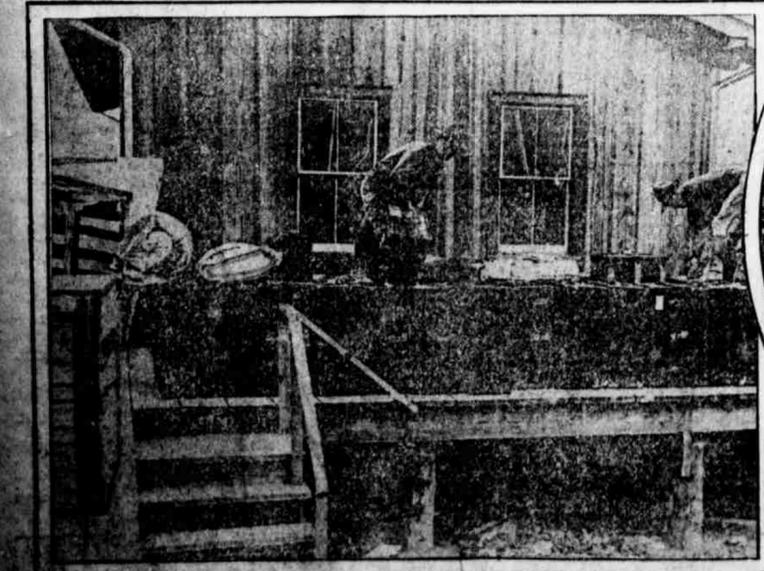
CAMP DIX AT WRIGHTSTOWN, N. J., NEARLY READY FOR THOUSANDS OF MEN OF NEW NATIONAL ARMY



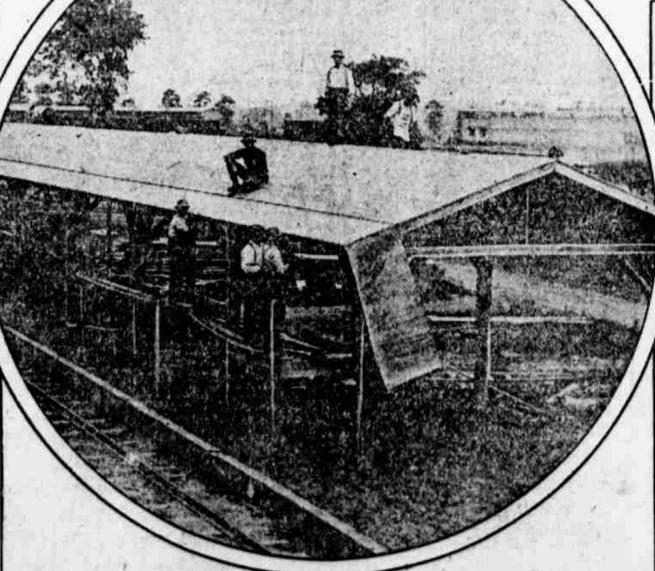
MONSTER BAKERY WILL BAKE BREAD BY THE TON
This big structure is being constructed to supply all the "staff of life" Camp Dix soldiers will need. It will also serve as a school for army bakers.



HOMES FOR THE ROOKIES NEARING COMPLETION
The barracks in which the soldiers live while in training are being built with great care. They will be warm but well ventilated in order that the men's health may be safeguarded.



OFFICERS' BAGGAGE ARRIVING IN CAMP
Every day sees new arrivals of commissioned army men who will have charge of the various departments of the "city" and the training of the soldiers for service in far-away France.



CAMP DIX STATION NEARS COMPLETION
Workmen are driving the last nails in the big wooden train shed in which the new soldiers will arrive at Wrightstown.



CLEANLINESS WILL BE RIGIDLY ENFORCED
Every precaution is to be used to keep Camp Dix healthy and pleasant. Already signs are posted in front of buildings to impress on new arrivals the rules of sanitation.